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File Code: 3420 **Date:** November 15, 2006
Route To:

Subject: Summary of Douglas-fir Tussock Moth Activity Occurring in the Sandia Mountain Wilderness and Tejano Canyon

To: Cid H. Morgan, Ranger, Sandia Ranger District

This letter outlines Douglas-fir tussock moth (DFTM) activity and damages occurring in the Sandia Mountain Wilderness and along Tejano Canyon (Sandia Crest National Scenic Byway). For background information, I have attached our letter of August 17, 2006, which was sent to Chuck Hagerdon while he was Acting Ranger on the Sandia Ranger District. As indicated in the that letter, DFTM populations, which were at outbreak levels in 2004 and 2005 on the Westside of the Sandia Mountain Wilderness, collapsed from a combination of parasitism, disease, and possibly lack of host material. Early signs of a building DFTM population on the east side of the Sandias were first observed in 2005.

In 2006, DFTM populations increased to outbreak levels on the east side of the Sandia Mountain Wilderness and along portions of Tejano Canyon causing significant defoliation and mortality to Douglas-fir and white fir, the preferred hosts of this insect. This increase in DFTM population levels and the associated tree damages was not unexpected since DFTM male moth trapping results along the Tejano Canyon (Sandia Crest National Scenic Byway) in 2005 indicated DFTM populations might build up to outbreak levels. In 2005, male DFTM trap catches along Tejano Canyon ranged from 33 to 47 male moths per trap; in 2006, DFTM male moths trapped ranged from 18-38. An average trap catch of 17-25 moths is predictive of an impending outbreak. Although the 2006 trapping results are somewhat lower, these data indicate that DFTM populations are still high and that defoliation will continue to be heavy again in 2007. DFTM outbreaks are generally short-lived and usually collapse after 2-3 years from a combination of the causes observed in the west side population.

If you have any questions concerning the DFTM activity occurring on the District, please call me at (505) 842-3287 or email me at trogers@fs.fed.us.

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